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## THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE.

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*Sunday School Work.*—We give below an outline which those who are studying the International Lessons of the present six months will find helpful in preparing for the Institute examination, which takes place June 30.

*The Material in Genesis 1-25.*—In the chapters covered by the lessons of this first quarter, even a cursory examination shows the development of two main lines of thought. In a study of the whole book the more complete development of these lines would be apparent. These two ideas are characteristic of the two great agencies ordained and established by Moses before his death, viz., the Priestly and the Prophetic.

The culmination of the Priestly work will be found later in the covenant made with Moses at Sinai and in the legislation respecting worship and life there communicated, but the teaching of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) shows that there was a gradual leading up to the covenant and the institution of these laws.

If then we look through the chapters of Genesis which form the subject of our study during the months of January, February and March, we find that three preliminary steps are indicated, all of which lead forward to the great event narrated in Exodus 19-20.<sup>1</sup> These are (1) The story of the creation of man which culminates in a covenant made with Adam (in accordance with which he is made ruler over the world), and in the establishment of that great institution, *the Sabbath*.

(2) A connecting outline presented in the genealogical table of the ten antediluvians.

(3) The story of the Deluge which involves a new beginning in the human race, and which culminates in the covenant with Noah and the establishment of the *ordinance concerning the shedding of blood*.

(4) A second connecting outline including the ten post-diluvians to Abraham.

(5) The story of Abraham's separation from the rest of the world, his settlement in Canaan, and most important, the covenant with Abraham and the establishment of the *institution of circumcision*. Then will be found to follow:

(6) A connecting outline from Abraham to Moses.

(7) The covenant at Sinai with Moses and the children of Israel, and the giving of the *Mosaic law*.

The preceding skeleton indicates the order and purpose of the material

<sup>1</sup>The references to chapters and verses are intentionally omitted, in the hope that the student will insert them for himself.

from the point of view of the priestly work which Israel as a priestly nation was commanded to undertake.

But Israel was to be a prophetic (teaching) as well as a priestly nation, and as such its institutions, its literature and its leaders must "speak for God," must warn the people of their sins, and encourage them to right doing.

Looking at this portion of the Book of Genesis, from such a point of view, what do we find?

(1) An account of the creation of man; the world prepared for him; everything provided; woman given him as a companion; and a life of perfect happiness and innocence.

(2) An account of the trial to which man must be subjected in order that he may undergo moral development; his failure to meet the test resulting in the entrance of sin, separation from God, expulsion from the garden.

(3) The beginning of crime, a brother killed by a brother, this, of course, the consequence of the first sin.

(4) An account of the growth of the line of the murderer; the building of cities, the centers of iniquity; the introduction of music, sensual in its influence; the invention of weapons of war for cruelty and bloodshed; the beginning of polygamy, all this the result of sin.

(5) The account of still greater increase in wickedness, which now becomes so great that mankind must be punished and indeed destroyed from the face of the earth. How shall the punishment be wrought? Through the deluge which shall punish the world for its sin and purify the world of its iniquity.

(6) The story of the growth of the world's inhabitants from the stock of Noah, until again wickedness prevails and the cry of it ascends to heaven. Again punishment is inflicted, this time in the confusion of tongues, which confounds the language of men and leads to their dispersion throughout the world.

(7) Humanity thus scattered draws no nearer to God; a new step must be taken; a single man is selected, Abraham, from Ur of the Chaldees, is led by the Divine Spirit away from home and country into a new land. Every step made is under the guiding providence of the Deity. Every mistake is followed by punishment, but is overruled by Providence.

(8) In pursuance of the Divine plan that through one nation the world should be blessed, Isaac is miraculously born. His movements are also under the direct guidance of a higher power.

(9) Of Isaac's two sons, Jacob and Esau, the former is selected, perhaps on account of certain qualities which he possessed, and in spite of the crookedness which he manifested in many ways.

Thus far our lessons bring us. The great teachings of this prophetic material are:

(1) The direct divine guidance of these ancestors of the Israelitish nation and faith.

(2) The presence of sin in the world; its all pervasive character and the suffering and punishment which are in every case its consequence.

It is not difficult to realize the fundamental character of all this material. Up to this time there is no reference to the regal factor which is also to play a part in the development of the chosen people. The priestly and the prophetic factors are here emphasized. Only when Israel shall become a nation and shall have a king will the third factor appear.

The three great ideas, therefore, which develop themselves are :

(1) The preparation made from time immemorial for the legislation to be given at Sinai.

(2) The over-ruling providence of a Supreme Being who is intimately acquainted with and intensely interested in every human action.

(3) The dire consequences of sin, introduced in the earliest times, increasing with marked rapidity, bringing ruin again and again upon man, as race and as individual.

*College Institutes.*—The demand for work in colleges in the form of Bible "Institutes" is increasing. At Illinois College, Jacksonville, Ill., the students and Faculty recently united in holding an "Institute" upon the subject of the Book of Genesis. The work was directed by Professor E. T. Harper of the Chicago Theological Seminary. He was assisted by President James E. Rogers of Blackburn University, Professor Albert Hurd of Knox College, and by various pastors of the city. During the present month a similar meeting, taking another Biblical subject, will be held at Lake Forest. Among the speakers are Professor Bissell of the Chicago Theological Seminary, Professor Thomas of Lake Forest, Dr. Thos. C. Hall of Chicago, and others.

At the State University of Indiana, at Bloomington, Ind., an "Institute" will be held in March under the general charge of Dr. C. F. Kent of the University of Chicago. The subject chosen is Hebrew Poetry. The speakers cannot yet be announced. To aid colleges in arranging for these "Institutes," a series of specimen programs has been prepared, and Dr. Kent has been detailed to conduct all "Institutes" in the neighborhood of Chicago, or where a circuit can be secured making it possible to attend several colleges in succession. Some of the suggested programs are as follows :

HEBREW POETRY: 1. The Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry; 2. The Hebrews as a Nation of Poets, and Palestine as a Home of Poetry; 3. The Earliest Hebrew Poetry (Gen. 49; Deut. 32, 33; Judges, 5); 4. The Problem of the Book of Job; 5. The Structure of the Book of Job; 6. The Form and Thought of the Song of Songs; 7. The Teaching of the Book of Ecclesiastes; 8. The Lyric Element in Hebrew Poetry, illustrated by selected psalms.

THE PERIOD OF THE EXILE.—1. The Internal Causes of the Exile; 2. The External Causes of the Exile; 3. The Life of the Exile; (a) literature (Isaiah, Ezekiel); (b) the external life; (c) the great ideas. 4. The Return from the Exile.